

## **INTRODUCTION**

The City of Brunswick adopted its first Master Plan in 1967. The 1967 Plan outlined recommendations for future land use, transportation, community, facilities and capital improvements within and surrounding the City. The Plan included many specific recommendations for improving the quality of life and appearance of Brunswick. It also included a section on economic development strategies and downtown revitalization. The Plan was primarily implemented through the Zoning Ordinance, Zoning Map and Subdivision Regulations which were subsequently adopted.

The twenty-five years since the Plan was adopted have seen many changes in the City as well as the surrounding region. Residential growth has occurred on the north and east sides of the city. The Brunswick Shopping Center has re-established the commercial center north of the downtown. Brunswick has become increasingly the residence of those employed in Montgomery County and Washington, D.C., as the MARC commuter rail was established in the early 1970s. Finally, in the last 25 years, the City of Frederick has grown exponentially both in terms of population and employment, thus wielding more regional influence.

### **Plan Purpose**

The 1992 Brunswick Master Plan represents an update of the 1967 Plan. Like the 1967 Plan, it is intended to serve as a guide for the future of the City and its environs, and to provide specific recommendations concerning future land uses, transportation patterns, community facilities, and capital improvements. The Plan purposes include the following:

- To provide information about the population, natural features, land use and development trends, transportation and community facilities of Brunswick;
- To identify issues which need to be addressed in the updated Plan;
- To provide a vision for the future of Brunswick, as stated in a series of goals, objectives and policies;
- To provide for orderly growth coordinated with transportation improvements and the provision of public services and facilities;
- To serve as a guide to local decision makers and to set an agenda for public action;
- To coordinate city plans with Frederick County's regional planning process.

### **Plan Update Process**

Each of the chapters of the Master Plan contains several sections representing the different steps in the planning process. The Plan preparation process includes the following:

Background Studies: Background studies were completed to present information about past trends and existing conditions. Information about the resident survey, population and housing, natural features, land use, transportation and community facilities is included. This information is vital to understanding the city's history, resources, problems, and potential.

Issues Analysis: The background studies were used to identify issues which need to be addressed in the Updated Plan.

Goals, Objectives and Policies: Goals, Objectives and Policies form the foundation on which the Plan's recommendations and proposals are based. These statements reflect a community's values, priorities, and vision. For the purposes of this Plan, Goals are defined as broad, end-state desires for the future of the community which are general in nature. Objectives are more specific and immediate than goals; they should be stated in measurable terms so that their attainment can be evaluated. Objectives set forth the means to attaining goals. Policies are defined as statements which serve as guidelines in public decision making. The establishment of policies helps ensure that public actions are consistent with the Plan's goals and objectives.

Proposals and Recommendations: The Plan's proposals and recommendations focus on Natural Features, Land Use, Transportation, and Community Facilities. The Master Plan map includes land use, transportation and community facility proposals. Other recommendations are incorporated in the Plan text.

Implementation: Finally, the Plan includes a chapter suggesting how the Plan proposals and recommendations should be implemented. Implementation measures include proposed regulatory changes, capital projects, and studies.

The Plan preparation process also included public workshops held by the Brunswick Planning Commission. Workshop topics included: the resident survey, natural features issues, land use issues, transportation issues and community facilities issues. Public hearings on the Draft Plan will be held by the Planning Commission and Mayor and Council to receive public comment prior to the Plan's adoption.

### **Summary of the 1967 Plan Recommendations**

The 1967 Comprehensive Master Plan for Brunswick represented the first effort to establish planning and zoning controls in the Town of Brunswick. The Plan was comprehensive in scope, covering natural features; population trends; economic activity; building and neighborhood conditions; residential, commercial, and industrial development; transportation; community facilities; and financial considerations. The Plan included detailed analyses and recommendations.

The Plan emphasized revitalization, economic growth and development, neighborhood appearance, and parks and recreation facilities. These emphases are reflected in the Plan's General Goals and Objectives:

- To make every possible effort to reverse the tendency toward the out-

migration of young people and the core of business, religious, and intellectual leaders whose presence is so essential for a progressive community.

- To provide a healthful, attractive, and convenient living environment with the complete range of high quality, community facilities, services, and amenities necessary to encourage a renewed sense of community pride and esteem.
- To promote the revitalization of the local commercial activity that is so critical to the economic health, appearance, and cohesion of the community.
- To attract new commercial and industrial enterprises by improving the attractiveness of the community and by assisting them in fulfilling their needs for sites, structures, and public utilities, facilities, and services.
- To seek faster and more convenient highway and mass transit linkage with faster growing areas of the region, particularly toward the Interstate 70S [1-270] corridor and along the proposed Potomac Basin Park.
- To preserve the remaining natural beauty in the community by retaining and maintaining steep slopes, stream beds, floodplains, and historic and scenic areas as recreation and open space sites and to promote the Brunswick area. as an intricate part of the recreation potential in the Potomac River Basin.
- To develop a more complete and well-rounded inventory of recreational facilities and programs for all age groups on a year-around basis in an effort to compensate for the lack of commercially operated recreation and entertainment facilities.

Population Projections: The 1967 Plan was based on several assumptions about future population growth. The Plan projected future population as follows:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Population</u>
1970	3,800
1980	4,200
1990	4,800

It was noted in the Plan that at the time the Plan was prepared, Brunswick was experiencing slow growth. Young people were moving out of town to seek employment elsewhere. Future decline was predicted unless economic and population growth were encouraged and nurtured by the Town through revitalization, economic development, and public improvements. The population

projections in the Plan "reflect a reasonable effort toward future self-improvement, and they anticipate further efforts on the part of Brunswick to take advantage of growth potentials [within the Region].

Development on Steep Slopes: The difficulty of building on steep slopes was recognized in the 1967 Plan. The Plan recommended that development be limited to areas with slopes of less than 20%, with medium to high density residential development occurring on 0 to 10% slopes, low density residential on slopes of 10% to 19% and extremely low density residential on slopes of 20% to 30%. Commercial and industrial development was recommended for expansive areas of 0-8% slopes with suitable access and location characteristics. The Plan recommended that the steep stream valleys in Brunswick be retained as public open space.

Economic Growth and Development : The 1967 Plan emphasized the need for economic growth in Brunswick. The Plan recommended that a brochure and fact sheet be developed to promote the Town to prospective businesses. The Plan included several recommendations to make the Town more attractive to businesses:

- Improve Route 464 to improve access to the I-70S [1-270] corridor and the Washington area
- Renovate or replace the decaying downtown
- Clean up the community
- Screen railroad yards

Light industrial uses, such as warehouses, storage and transfer facilities, and light manufacturing, were noted in the 1967 Plan to be the most appropriate and desirable industrial uses for the Brunswick area. The Plan noted a future need for 50 acres of land designated for heavy industry and 120 acres of light industrial land.

The 1967 Plan map designated the area along the railroad tracks south of Potomac Street for heavy industrial uses. Heavy commercial and light industrial uses were designated for a large area at the southeast corner of the intersection of Jefferson Pike (MD 180) and Route 17, outside the Town limits, and along West Potomac Street on the west side of Town (in the vicinity of the former Acme store).

With regard to commercial development, the 1967 Plan noted the need for a sub-regional shopping center, neighborhood shopping centers, highway service centers, and heavy commercial areas. The discussion of commercial development mostly focused on the need to renovate the downtown or replace the downtown by relocating commercial uses to a central, more spacious location. The Plan authors felt that the downtown area needed to be totally redeveloped by leveling existing structures and building new structures in accordance with a sketch included in the 1967 Plan. As an alternative, sketches of a new shopping area to be located along Souder Road were also included in the Plan.

Two areas were therefore designated Central Business District on the 1967 Plan map: the downtown and an area on the north side of Souder Road in the vicinity of Second Avenue.

Community commercial areas were also shown west of the Town along a proposed north/south road connection. Highway service areas were designated between MD 180 and US 340, along Petersville Road, north of the downtown; and in the area between Souder Road and East H Street near Ninth Avenue.

Residential Development : Most of the Town of Brunswick and its vicinity was designated for residential development on the 1967 Plan. The Plan noted a need for 113 acres additional acres for the residential development in the Town between 1966 and 1990, and 60 additional acres for the areas adjacent to the Town in the same period. The Plan also recommended that a greater variety of housing types and neighborhood designs be provided for in the Town. The Plan pinpointed "blighted" neighborhoods and outlined a program of conservation, rehabilitation, and redevelopment to eliminate blight.

Transportation: The 1967 Plan recommended several new road connections in the Brunswick area to improve traffic circulation in and around the Town as well as to improve regional access. The main north-south connections in the Town were to be Petersville Road, a realigned Gum Springs Road extending to Point of Rocks Road, a new road located in the valley between Maple and Second Avenues, and a new road located in the valley west of the Town boundary. East-west connections were to include Potomac Street, A Street, an extension of H Street from Gum Springs Road west across Town and out to Jefferson Pike, Souder Road (relocated to the north at Second Avenue), and another new road north of Rosemont.

The 1967 Plan envisioned parkways in the stream valleys, providing vehicular north-south access as well as pedestrian and bike ways. By locating the road within the valleys, steep slopes could be avoided.

The 1967 Plan recommended improvements to several problem intersections in Town. These included the following intersections: Petersville Road, B Street, and Maryland Avenue; East D Street, Second Avenue, and Terrace Avenue; Park Avenue and East A Street; Gum Springs Road and Park Avenue; Gum Springs Road, E Street, and Eighth Avenue; and Souder Road, Cummings Drive, Ninth Avenue, and H Street.

Community Facilities: The 1967 Plan's Community Facility Recommendations mostly concerned parks, open space and recreation facilities. The Plan proposed a park network using the flood plain areas and wooded stream valleys. These areas would interconnect. Bicycle and pedestrian paths were proposed in conjunction with vehicular parkways. The Plan also noted the need for additional playgrounds in Town.

The Plan also anticipated the development of two new parks. A park was recommended to be located on the excess land adjacent to the high school. The development of "Potomac Basin Park" in the vicinity of the C&O Canal and towpath along the river was also anticipated.

Implementation: The 1967 Plan was implemented in the following ways:

- Adoption of the Town Zoning Ordinance, Zoning Map, and Subdivision

#### Regulations.

- Expansion of and improvements to the Town water and sewer systems, including the construction of water intake and treatment plant on the Potomac River.
- Development of recreation facilities near the high school.
- Development of a new library, new police station, and a health clinic.
- Improvements to deteriorated dwellings and neighborhoods throughout the Town.
- Establishment of a commercial center off Souder Road through the development of the Brunswick Shopping Center.
- Provision of a greater variety of housing types through the development of townhouses, apartments and duplexes on the north side of Town.

The 1967 Plan's recommendations have been followed in a general sense, but many of the specific recommendations on which the Plan was focused were never successfully implemented. The Plan was successful in its attempt to establish land use and development policies and regulations in Brunswick. The Plan addressed a number of issues in a comprehensive way, so was successful in that problems and issues were identified. Through the designation of Open Space areas on the Plan and the subsequent establishment of Open Space zoning, the City's stream valleys have been protected from development. Other land use recommendations, such as the designation of a commercial center along Souder Road, have also been implemented.

The specific recommendations of the Plan, however, particularly those which were central to the Plan, were not implemented. The downtown area was not redeveloped, nor were the many suggested road improvements in and around the City ever completed. The stream valleys, although preserved to some extent, were never acquired by the City and developed into parks.

The 1967 Plan was based on an outlook which did not anticipate the growth of Frederick County as part of the Washington Metropolitan area. The Plan predicted further economic and population decline in Brunswick unless a strong economic base to replace the railroad was developed. The Plan did not anticipate the establishment of the commuter rail line through Brunswick or the development of employment centers within commuting distance to Brunswick.

The shortcomings of the 1967 Plan point to the need for its update. The City officials need to reconsider the issues and problems facing Brunswick today and develop recommendations which address those issues. The recommendations of the 1967 Plan may be based on values and assumptions which are no longer valid today.